

NLM should establish "Challenge Awards" to support planning for implementation of specific report recommendations deemed to be of exceptionally high that requiring further study.

The essential objective of these awards is to identify specific groups and institutions that are prepared to take responsibility for a portion of the problem, to form alliances and to work collaboratively toward achievement of our common goals.



High priority areas include but are not necessarily limited to the following examples:

- ▼ Evolving role of the health sciences librarian. For example, the role of health sciences librarians in the management of institutional information systems, perhaps coupling knowledge based systems with computer based patient record systems. Possible participant groups include JCAHO, MLA, the National Association for Health Data Organizations (NAHDO), and the Association for Health Services Research (AHSR).
- ▼ Professional educational programs for health sciences librarians. Curriculum development, and experimentation with alternative curricular models within the MLS course of study. Areas of experimentation could include core and elective coursework, practical educational technologies, accelerated instruction schedules, etc. Possibilities for joint faculty appointments and combined degree programs at the masters and doctoral levels should also be thoroughly explored. Possible participant groups include universities and associations.
- ▼ Lifelong learning programs for health sciences librarians. Education of professionals after they have joined the job market is essential for retaining skills and learning required new ones. The

current rapid growth of electronic information systems both aggravates the need and appears to offer a means to assist in the solution to learning problems. The panel heard descriptions of university-based MPH programs at two schools that were conducted over weekends, and used home study and electronic methods, and that might be extensible to include medical informatics and medical librarianship. We believe it will be worthwhile for NLM to offer support to a group or a consortium of interested groups who wish to conduct a careful study of this problem and to propose new strategies. Possible participant groups include universities and professional associations.

- ▼ **Broadening recruitment into health sciences librarianship.** How to attract people to the field who can meet its growing challenges remains an important issue. With the increasing cultural diversity in our society, accompanied with varying information needs and requirements for services, it is particularly important that minorities be better represented in the profession. Special efforts are needed to increase recruitment and retention of minority students, as well as to ensure that the best and brightest of any ethnicity are being brought into careers in health

sciences librarianship. Possible participant groups include MLA, African-American Medical Library Association, the United Negro College Fund and comparable organizations serving other minority groups, Association of Academic Health Science Library Directors (AAHSLD), and ALA.



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### **Funding for Challenge Awards**

Funding would be made available by the NLM for one to two year planning grants and possibly for subsequent pilot studies and projects. Applications would be solicited by a public announcement.

Awards would be made following evaluation and competitive selection. Awards should be made to a single primary sponsor institution for a proposal that includes an explicit commitment of other associations, institutions, and individuals to seek solution of a challenge; co-sponsorship by other funding sources would be desirable.